

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2011

6:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Vizzo-Paniccia; Co-chair, M. Ayala,
Silva, Taylor-Moye, Walsh

NON-COMMITTEE: Council members: Baker, M. McCarthy, T. McCarthy

CITY ATTORNEY: Mark Anastasi

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia called the meeting to order at 6:09 pm.

Approval of Committee Meeting Minutes of August 22, 2011.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER T. McCarthy MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER M. AYALA SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia stated that the agenda would be taken out of order.

123-10 Appointment of Jeffrey Burr (R) to the Harbor Commission.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia apologized for not having the paperwork available. She said she reviewed it at home and she didn't find any outstanding issues associated with the appointee. She noted that Mr. Burr's appointment would expire during the year 2013 if it was approved tonight.

Council member T. McCarthy suggested that if the item passed, they should assure that all the committee members and council members review the information prior to adding the item to the next city council agenda.

Mr. Burr stated he was a life resident and he has owned a coffee shop downtown for ten years; the Take Time Café Deli. He said he grew up in Black Rock and he fishes in the waters. He expressed that he cares about the waterfront and the city. He mentioned that he knows others that serve on the commission and he felt he would work well with them.

Council member Taylor-Moye stated as the liaison to the Harbor Commission, she commended Mr. Burr for stepping up to serve on the commission. She expressed that hopefully, he will do the right thing serving on the commission.

Council member T. McCarthy stated he has known Mr. Burr for a while, noting that he is involved with the Black Rock Little League. He said he fully supported the appointment and he urged the committee to approve the appointment.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYAL SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

****It was stated that the item will be on the November 2 agenda for a full city council vote.***

90-10 Resolution requesting verification of elimination of all take-home vehicles in FY2012 City Budget.

Council member Baker stated that he was the maker of the resolution. He said he hoped that someone from the city would be present to explain what happens to take-home vehicles and to obtain an accounting of gas costs etc. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia stated that there was nothing outlined in the resolution regarding the financial aspect.

Council member Baker said the financial costs were the whole purpose of the resolution; per his request to provide the information. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia said if she had been aware of that, she would have followed up to request it.

Council member T. McCarthy stated that the city eliminated all but three (3) cars. He said he didn't feel it was inappropriate to ask for costs associated with take-home vehicles. He thought City Attorney Anastasi could answer the question.

Attorney Anastasi stated that the financial report request would go to the Budget & Appropriations Committee. Council member T. McCarthy said he didn't feel it was a major issue to request the information on an informal basis.

Council member Silva asked if they could hold a meeting before the next committee meeting on November 7 to review the financial information. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked the committee members if they would be available to meet at 5:00 pm on November 7 before the next scheduled meeting to review the information regarding cost savings for the vehicles.

Council member Silva stated that he didn't want to see the item die in committee and then have to wait until next year to address it again.

Attorney Anastasi clarified that the resolution didn't indicate financial information; therefore, he didn't feel that anyone would presume to submit the information.

Council member Walsh stated that there's an ordinance on the books that requires every city vehicle to be marked and identified. Secondly, he said if Council member Baker had questions about the cost savings, he thought the questions should have been previously presented. He said there shouldn't be a problem requesting the information.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia stated that Council member Walsh attended the previous meetings, but the item was tabled a couple of times.

Council member T. McCarthy stated that the administration attended a meeting months ago to address the details of the resolution, but the item was pushed back for a while so the maker of the resolution could be present to ask questions. He felt that if someone has a take-home vehicle, they should be disciplined according to a previous statement the Mayor made; although there are exceptions to the rule, such as the parks police. He reiterated that all this was explained by the administration.

Council member Taylor-Moye agreed with Council member McCarthy. She recalled that the item was kept on the agenda to give the co-maker a chance to ask questions. She questioned what specifically needed to be done to resolve the issue. Council member Baker stated that a while ago, the Mayor made an announcement that the city could eliminate take-home cars; however, there is still the question of the associated costs. He said he requested information from Andrew Nunn's office but he never received it. He felt it was crucial to find out the costs savings and he emphasized that he would continue to ask for the information.

Council member T. McCarthy stated that the questions should be clearly identified:

- Where the vehicles are?

- Who has access to the vehicles and what persons are allowed to take them home?
- Why don't the vehicles have identification plates for the person(s) allowed to take them home?

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia repeated that all the information outlined in the resolution didn't pertain to financial costs. She stated that if they tabled item, the committee can meet on November 7 at 5:00 pm. and the item will be back on the table or will die. Otherwise, Council member Baker can resubmit another resolution and request the financial information.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia polled the committee's availability to attend the November 7 meeting at 5:00 pm: Council members: Ayala, Taylor-Moye, Silva and Walsh indicated they would attend the meeting.

Attorney Anastasi reiterated that they were asking for a volume of information that wasn't originally referenced in the resolution.

Council member T. McCarthy stated that if they were scheduling another meeting, they should clearly relay the questions they wanted answered. Council member Baker stated the following questions:

1. How much are the gas savings?
2. What is the repair savings on the vehicles and maintenance?
3. An accounting of all the vehicles being used?
4. Who actually takes home the vehicles for emergency purposes etc.?
5. Do all the vehicles have identification and plates attached?
6. An explanation why some vehicles have lettering and why some of the vehicles don't? – administration vehicles only - *this doesn't apply to unmarked police department vehicles*

Council member Silva suggested that they table the item and schedule a new meeting to avoid a conflict with the approval of the other agenda items that need to go before the full city council.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER T. McCARTHY MOVED TO TABLE ITEM 90-10
PENDING ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS REQUESTED TO BE
DISCUSSED AND REVIEWED AT A SPEICAL MEETING ON NOVEMBER
7, 2011**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

97-10 Reappointment of Anne Pappas Phillips (D) to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia updated that she contacted Ms. Phillips twice today and she was notified that she is under doctor's care and not able to attend the meeting tonight.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER T. McCARTHY MOVED TO TABLE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER WALSH SECONDED**

City Attorney Anastasi updated that Ms. Pappas Phillips had been appointed and her term expired. He said she was serving on the commission as a hold over.

Council member Silva asked if she was approved as a lifetime alternate. Attorney Anastasi replied no, she is a full commission member.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

148-10 Proposed change to Civil Service Commission Rule XV to increase Resident Preference Points.

David Purcell addressed the committee to explain the rules for persons who pass the firefighter exam, noting that a resident will now have 10% added to their passing score for open competitive exams. He stated that last year (600) people took the exam and one-third passed, which resulted in one-third of the candidates being Bridgeport residents. They are looking to increase that number and he thought the administration agreed and are in support of the 5% increase. He explained that it will mean an increase in the number of Bridgeport residents that pass the exam that will result in a higher percentage. He said there has been some criticism from the union that they should be testing for the best and brightest. However, they train everyone and they need candidates that have a strong educational background, but it's not a requirement that they be a rocket scientist; he felt they should have a good mix. Presently, there are (300) applications for the firefighter exam. He explained that they are required to take a strenuous physical exam and (301) Bridgeport residents passed. City Attorney Anastasi added that the change will apply for all exams and tests.

Mr. Purcell recalled the previous increase of 10%. He noted that the increase recommendation would need to be approved with a two-thirds vote. He said they conducted a survey and they found that New Haven, Meriden and Norwalk give an additional 5-points. He noted that the 5-points give a higher result than a percentage. He said there was some discussion of how to increase Bridgeport resident scores and it was determined that to take the exam, the candidate can live anywhere (including out of state). He further mentioned that a lot of candidates will be coming to Bridgeport to take the exam. He explained that the competition is great and he felt that giving Bridgeport

resident an edge up would be beneficial – *he distributed information from CCM and information from other municipalities pertaining to scores*. He noted a written exam will be conducted on December 10, 2011. He went on to state that they had discussion about hard points vs. percentage and he suggested that they go with the percentage.

Council member Silva asked about a candidate that might take the test in California and if the results were transferred and honored in Bridgeport. Mr. Purcell said yes. He noted that there were candidates from New Jersey, California and Chicago that will be coming to Bridgeport to take the CPAT exam.

Mr. Purcell offered some information about what the test involved; such as the candidate having to carry 75-lbs on a Stairmaster for three minutes. He noted that they can test three times before they are eliminated.

Council member M. McCarthy asked if there were 1,300 residents that took the CPAT exam. Mr. Purcell said he wasn't sure, but he stated that he could get the information. He noted that there have been upwards of (200) people that took the test and the cost is \$150.00 per person. He said currently there are (104) residents who took the test. He clarified that being a firefighter is a vigorous job and he stressed that candidates have to adhere to more strength endurance than the police department requires.

City Attorney Anastasi reiterated that the percentage is applicable to other tests, not just the firefighter exam. He said they would be clear about making an official announcement for the exam. He clarified that any hiring done in the city tends to attract litigation, although there are different degrees of exposure. However, notice of the exam will be forthcoming so that people are aware that they need to prepare for it.

Mr. Purcell noted that the duration of the certificate is up to the municipality. He said they accepted CPAT applicants from June 2010 through December 2011. He repeated that information has gone out about the test and he said that only one woman has applied to date, noting that a lower percentage of women pass the test due to the perception that they aren't physically strong enough. He emphasized that there are specific challenges that a potential firefighter must do that requires stamina and endurance.

Council member M. McCarthy said he wasn't sure what it will take to get city residents interested in the job. He repeated his concern about not seeing the city open up to possible litigation. Mr. Purcell stated that if a candidate already has the 10%, and they scored 35%, the final score will be 45%. He requested committee approval so the item could be passed on to the full city council for a vote. He said if it was approved, the matter could be advertised in the newspaper within two weeks before the exam starts.

Council member Baker asked if they were looking to approve a 15% passing mark, noting that a passing grade is 75, he asked what the 15% was passed on. Mr. Purcell

said it equated to a passing grade; for example, they will grant 15% to each candidate that passes the exam **for Bridgeport residents only.**

Council member Baker stated that according to his research, he thought the 15% was for firefighters that are currently on the job. Mr. Purcell said he wasn't sure if that applied for existing employees. He said it would be difficult to apply it for those already on the job. He noted that all the neighboring towns use the process.

Attorney Anastasi stated that the change will result in a professional uniform set of standards to avoid the claim that the test isn't nationally recognized.

Mr. Purcell stated that the fire chief and the Fire Department Commission asked for the process to be implemented.

Council member Baker questioned what the breakout was of ethnic origins, noting the disparities in the numbers on the percentages information sheet. Mr. Purcell said the CPAT levels the playing field. He mentioned that there are serial CPAT takers. Council member Baker questioned if it was fair to let them keep taking the test. Mr. Purcell responded that there are volunteer firemen from Shelton and Trumbull who take the Bridgeport test, but he doesn't want to give them any advantage over Bridgeport firefighters who haven't taken the test.

Council member Walsh asked for clarification regarding the commentary text outlined in the Rule XV. Resident Preference document. He asked if there was an open competitive exam for the fire chief. Mr. Purcell stated that the information applied to open entry level tests for firemen.

There was some open discussion regarding the rules that apply for open level entries vs. the fire chief position. It was noted that the fire chief position isn't in the bargaining unit

Attorney Anastasi stated that back during the late 1980's, they enforced promotion exams in the police department and a statute was passed that they can't require residency as a term of employment for anyone covered by a collective bargaining agreement; although it can be applied at the entry level.

Council member Walsh asked the number of entry level people currently on the fire department. Mr. Purcell said the number was between four and six: (2) administrative; (1) fire marshal; (1) administrator in the fire chief's office and (3 to 4) on the fire line.

Council member Walsh stated that he was troubled by the fact that there are only two (2) female firefighters. Mr. Purcell said they aren't coming in with CPAT certifications.

Council member Walsh questioned the last time they gave an entry level exam for the fire department test, what was the breakdown of residents vs. non-residents. Mr. Purcell said he wasn't sure of that information, but he could find out.

Council member Walsh asked if a candidate scores a 99, does the extra 15% mean something. Mr. Purcell said yes, in that case their score could go up to 115. It was stated that this only applies for the final score; the 15% doesn't apply to the initial test.

Council member M. McCarthy asked if 75 would still be a passing score. Mr. Purcell said he expected it would be and those passing the written exam will be invited to move on to the oral exam. He explained that the two scores are combined and the preference points are added on. Attorney Anastasi stated that the spread will be set prior to the exam and adhered to.

Council member Taylor-Moye asked if a candidate passed the physical and moved on to the written and oral exams, is this when the 15% is added to the score; i.e., if they score 75 then they receive 15% on top of that. Mr. Purcell said that was correct. Attorney Anastasi clarified that the only change was to the increase in percentage and they determined that 15% is where it should be. He further clarified that it's not a new concept, only a new percentage number.

Council member T. McCarthy commented that the matter related to giving a leg up to Bridgeport residents and they have to get the standard scores. Overall, he felt it was a good step and it should be supported to up the number, because the outcome will result in a more diverse fire department.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA MOVED TO APPROVE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED**

Council member Walsh stated that he would vote against the item in committee, although he was in favor of city resident preferences. However, he said he wasn't sure if they should go forward with the test. He noted that he would vote against it tonight and bring it up off the floor at the next city council meeting.

**** MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE VOTE IN OPPOSITION (COUNCIL MEMBER WALSH)**

***Not on the consent calendar**

**Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia requested that Mr. Purcell attend the city council meeting on November 7, 2011 to address the item.*

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services